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ABSTRACT

This volume, the second of two reports on development of teacher incentive structures, presents case studies of a career ladder design and teacher evaluation experiment in four Utah school districts. Case studies examined relationships among career ladder features, process variables, and career ladder effectiveness, which is defined in terms of teacher acceptance. The document contains six chapters--one on study background, four that describe the four case studies, and one on results and recommendations; appendices contain the study instruments and other supplementary materials. Case studies were conducted in districts with autonomy in plan design and implementation. Investigation involved content analysis, interviews with 160 teachers, and questionnaires administered to 204 respondents. Findings include the following: (1) a connection existed between teacher involvement and positive attitudes toward career ladders; (2) communication breakdown correlated negatively with teacher understanding and acceptance; (3) new role demands adversely affected acceptance; (4) administrator involvement related to smooth functioning; (5) teacher involvement developed acceptance; and (6) meeting teachers' needs brought positive reactions. Recommendations concern (1) teacher involvement in all planning phases; (2) development of planned inservice and communication efforts; (3) making the system compatible with career orientations; (4) meeting teachers' diverse needs; and (5) considering merits of decentralized approaches to career ladders. (CJH)

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/FINAL REPORT: SECRETARY'S DISCRETIONARY PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTATION GRANT TO DEVELOP TEACHER INCENTIVE STRUCTURES/

U.S. Department of Education Grant # G008410033

# CAREER LADDERS AND TEACHER INCENTIVES:

# THE UTAH EXPERIMENT

# PART II: CASE STUDIES

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Four district level case studies were conducted to investigate the relationship between career ladder structural features, process variables, and career ladder effectiveness. Career ladder effectiveness in this study was defined in terms of teacher acceptance and satisfaction.

The case studies were conducted in the state of Utah which has chosen a decentralized approach to career ladders. The districts were provided with maximal local autonomy in the design and implementation of their career ladder plan. These case studies, conducted in the first year of Utah's experiment, involved content analysis of plans, interviews with 160 teachers in schools, and the administration of questionnaires to 204 respondents.

Major findings included the following: 1) There was a strong positive connection between teacher involvement and positive attitudes toward career ladders. 2) Communication breakdown was a major problem and thus correlated negatively with teacher understanding and acceptance of the plans. 3) The complexity of the plans and new role demands placed on teachers were found to negatively correlate with teacher acceptance. 4) Administrator involvement was positively related to smooth functioning systems. 5) The absence of quotas and the opportunity for broad teacher involvement in the career ladder plans were positively linked to acceptance. 6) Flexibility of the plans in meeting the diverse

needs of all teachers was positively associated with positive teacher reactions.

Recommendations from the study included the following: 1) High teacher involvement in all phases of career ladder planning, implementation and evaluation; 2) Planned inservice efforts to help teachers become knowledgeable in the features and options available in the plan; The design of career ladder systems that are both simple and compatible with the basic career orientation of teachers, which is teaching; 4) Flexibility in meeting the diverse roles of the broad spectrum of teachers; and 5) A consideration of the merits of decentralized approaches to career ladder design and implementation.

# *CAREER LADDERS IN UTAH:

# FOUR CASE STUDIES

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Background to the Study

In 1983 the same educational reform fever which was simmering nationally also developed in Utah. A number of key leaders and groups in the state helped focus public and political attention on the need to improve the schools through attempts to improve the teaching profession (Kauchak, 1984). Utah, a strongly Republican state, had been interested in the related ideas of merit pay for teachers and teacher-incentive plans since the early 1950's (Schmidt, 1984). In 1953 the legislature passed House Bill Eleven which authorized funds for experimentation with compensation plans based on performance. Initially three districts were funded to experiment with merit pay plans: later two more were added. Each district was responsible for defining "good teaching," developing a system to measure it, and implementing that system to determine meritorious teachers.

Although funded until 1960, when the legislature failed to continue funding for it, the experimental merit pay project had several problems (Schmidt, 1984). The first was political: the legislature had not been kept well informed of the project's status. Probably a more fundamental problem was methodological: districts had neither the expertise nor resources to successfully differentiate between good and excellent teachers. High administrative costs were one symptom of this problem.

In 1984, the Utah legislature, fueled by a number of national and local reports again turned its attention to the idea

of performance-based merit pay. In an analysis of the factors which contributed to the ultimate form of House Bill 110, researchers focused on forces both outside and within the state (Campbell et al, 1984).

Outside the state, probably the most influential force was the 1983 report of the National Committee on Excellence in Education entitled, A Nation at Risk. This report called attention to the low status of the teaching profession and problems involved in attracting and holding superior teachers. Among its many recommendations were that teachers' salaries should be increased, professionally competitive, and performance based.

Also instrumental in influencing the direction of career ladders in the state was a visit to the state by Governor Lamar Alexander from the state of Tennessee. This state had taken a leadership position in the creation of career ladders, and Alexander's visit to Utah helped channel reform fervor into concrete proposals for career ladders.

Proof of public interest in reform came from a public opinion poll published in August, 1983, in the Deseret News, one of the two largest newspapers in Utah. This poll indicated that 71 percent of the Utah citizenry either strongly favored or somewhat favored increasing taxes to improve the schools. This was in strong contrast to the 1970s when fiscally conservative voters turned down a number of school related tax referenda (Campbell et al. 1984). Newspaper editorials as well as commentaries on radio and television underscored the state's interest and committment to some form of reform.

Probably the document most influential in translating this sentiment into concrete suggestions for career ladders was the Utah Education Reform Steering Committee's November 1983 publication Education in Utah: A Call to Action. Included in this report were a number of educational reforms including increased funding for higher education, scholarships for teachers in public education, productivity studies and 41.4 million dollars for career ladders (Campbell et al, 1984).

The career ladder recommendations in this report called for a state-wide system with four levels, beginning with initial certification and progressing through the 4th level of teacher leader. Criteria for progression through each level included the following:

performance and evaluation of knowledge of subject matter,

student achievement,

classroom management techniques,

experience,

level of education, and

assumption of extra responsibilities

There were salary increases called for, ranging from $16,000 to $17,655 for beginning teachers to $25,000 to $34,900 for teacher leaders. In addition to additional responsibilities, the option of a lengthened school contract year was also introduced, making the top salary for level four $43,600. It is significant

that the final bill, House Bill 110, contained provisions for a lengthened contract year and additional responsibilities, in addition to the idea of rewarding teachers for meritorious service.

Other agencies and people in the state influential in focusing public and legislative interest on career ladders included the Govenor's office, a coalition of school district superintendents, college deans of education and state office of education personnel, the state Society of Superintendents, the School Board Association, and the State Office of Education. The only major non-education group opposing the bill was the Utah Taxpayers Association, which fought the bill because of the possibility of higher taxes (Campbell et al, 1984).

Within the educational community, major opposition to the idea and ultimately to House Bill 110 came from the Utah Education Association (UEA). Their resistance centered around the following issues: 1) the linking of career ladders to merit pay, 2) the conceptual unclarity of the idea, 3) teacher resistance and 4) the lack of adequate evaluation techniques to place teachers on the ladder (Campbell et al, 1984). Though their resistance did not kill the bill, their pressure was instrumental in the insertion of a provision which would allow districts to allocate up to 50% of their career ladder funds for extended contract days for all teachers. The argument made by UEA in this regard was that all teachers in the state were deserving of increased compensation.

## House Bill 110: The Utah Career Ladder Bill

The final document that emerged from the Utah legislature was a five page bill which in essence authorized $15,258,937 for district-based career ladder systems. The bill was to be administered by the State Office of Education and funded $866 per teacher in the state. (This was an average figure that ranged from $770 in one district to $912 in another.)

The authorization of the bill reads as follows:

> The legislature recognizes the importance of rewarding educators who strive to improve the quality of education, of providing incentives for educators employed by the public schools to continue to pursue excellence in education, of rewarding educators who demonstrate the achievement of excellence, and of properly compensating educators who assume additional educational responsibilities.
>
> In order to achieve these goals and to provide educators with increased opportunities for professional growth, school districts are authorized and encouraged to develop career ladder programs.

The key component of House Bill 110 was that the design, implementation, and evaluation of the career ladders was to be a district rather than a state function. The reasons for this were probably as much political as pragmatic. From a political perspective, the state has a long history of decentralized district autonomy. Pragmatically, the task of designing a statewide system which would accomodate all the diverse educational units in the state was immense (Utah's 40 school districts range in type from urban to rural and in size from one with 193 students and three schools to one with 62,129 students and 81 schools).

Other key components of the bill were that at least half of the career ladder funds were to be spent on career ladders (rather than extended teacher calendar days) and that the State Office of Education was responsible for the design and implementation of the career ladder standards.

Key standards developed by the State Office of Education included the following:

--Career ladder programs should be developed with cooperative action among teachers, parents, school administrators, and local school boards. Career ladder plans will not be accepted by the State Board unless documented evidence of this joint effort is submitted with the plan by the requesting local agency.

--Each local agency shall develop a procedure to evaluate teachers for placement and advancement on the career ladders, which shall:

a. Be fair, consistent, and valid according to generally accepted principles,

b. Incorporate clearly stated job descriptions,

c. Be in writing,

d. Involve teachers in the development of the evaluation instrument,

e. Inform the teacher beforehand in writing about all aspects of the evaluation procedure,

f. Specify the frequency with which evaluations will be made of teachers with less than three years of teaching experience and other teachers, and,

g. Not preclude informal classroom observations.

--At least 50% of the career ladder funds shall be directed to advancement on career ladders, based on effective teaching performance, with student progress playing a significant role.

--Not more than 50% of each local agency's career ladder allocation shall be used for an extended contract year providing for additional paid non-teaching days beyond the regular school year for curriculum development, in-service training, preparation, parent-teacher conferences.

--Funds allocated for career ladders are intended for certified instructional teaching personnel--those who render direct and personal services to and interact with students. The local district at its discretion may include certified media personnel, guidance personnel, social workers, and psychologists in the program to the extent that their primary function is that of teaching. Excluded are instructional personnel such as interns, teacher aides, para-professionals, secretaries for teachers, and support personnel such as administrators, supervisors, attendance personnel, health services personnel, business officials, and non-certified media and guidance personnel.

## Implementation

House Bill 110 was passed on January 20, 1984 on the last day of the legislative session. From there it went to the State Office of Education for implementation. Their guidelines required that districts requesting career ladders submit an operational plan by May 15, 19884. Under extenuating circumstances this deadline was extended but most districts submitted plans by the May 15 deadline.

A survey of superintendents during the planning process revealed considerable diversity with some common threads (Career Ladders Work Group, 1984). Most districts had formed a single committee to develop the plan, and these committees consisted (in order of numbers) of teachers, parents, administrators, and school board members. Most plans included provisions for additional teacher responsibilities and extended work calendars. The major problem areas encountered by the planning committees

had to do with evaluating teacher performance and ways of integrating student progress into these evaluations (a vaguely worded element of the bill that has been interpreted by districts in a multitude of ways).

(Utah State Office of Education, 1984, 1-2)

The diversity of these plans can be seen in an initial analysis shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Utah Career Ladder Features

| District | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | x | | x | | | | | |
| Beaver | x | x | | | | | x | |
| Box Elder | x | x | | | | x | | |
| Cache | | | x | | | | | |
| Carbon | x | | | | | | x | |
| Dagget | x | | | | | | | |
| Davis | x | | | x | | x | x | |
| Duchesne | | | | | | | | x |
| Emery | | | x | x | | x | x | |
| Garfield | x | | | | | | | |
| Grand | x | | | | | | x | |
| Granite | x | | | x | x | | x | |
| Iron | | | | | | | | x |
| Jordan | x | x | | | | | | |

Table 1.1 cont.

| District | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Juab | x | | | x | | | x | |
| Kane | x | | | | | | | |
| Logan | | x | | | | | | |
| Millard | x | | | x | | x | | |
| Morgan | | x | | | | x | x | |
| Murray | x | | | | | x | | |
| Nebo | | | | x | | | x | |
| North Sanpete | | x | | | | | x | |
| North Summit | x | x | | | | | | |
| Ogden | | x | | | | | | |
| Park City | | x | x | | x | | x | |
| Piute | x | | | x | | | x | |
| Provo | | | | x | x | | x | x |
| Rich | x | x | | | | x | x | |
| Salt Lake | | | x | x | | | | |
| San Juan | x | | | | | | x | |
| Sevier | x | | | | | | | x |
| South Sanpete | x | x | | x | | | x | |
| South Summit | x | | | x | | | x | |
| Tooele | | x | | x | | | x | |
| Uintah | | x | | | | | | x |
| Wasatch | | x | | | | | x | |
| Washington | | | | x | | | x | |
| Wayne | | x | | | | | | |
| Weber | | x | x | | | | | |

Table 1.1 cont.

| District | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Uintah Basin | | x | | | | | | x |
| Sevier Valley | x | x | | | | | x | |
| Davis | x | x | x | | | x | | x |
| Bridgerland | x | | | x | | | x | |
| Ogden/Weber | | | x | x | | | | |
| Blind/Deaf School | x | x | | | | | x | |

Note. Column Meanings: 1.) Use of teacher/school/district/ agency individual plans or projects. 2.) Use of merit increments for high performance in the classroom without additional responsibility. 3.) Use of teacher initiated portfolio for evaluation/advancement. 4.) Use of restrictive quotas at top level(s). 5.) Use of additional funds outside H. B. 110. 6.) Use of additional education for ladder advancement. 7). Use of extended year beyond 4 days of assignment. 8.) Use of specific testing to measure student progress specified in the plan.

Given the diversity of career ladder plans in Utah, a unique "experiment" existed in terms of learning about workable career ladder and teacher incentive structures and functions. Because these plans were being implemented in the 1983-84 school year in a variety of districts ranging from large urban to small rural, the Utah experiment offered a valuable and unique opportunity to study incentive structures in functioning career ladder systems. The need to study these systems at their onset was considerable. A major goal of this research was to analyze career ladder systems in Utah, and to identify variables critical to success.

## Method

The purpose of this study was to document development of different career ladders begun in Utah, and to draw ideas and problems from them which might contribute understanding to the development of teacher career ladder sytems.

Research was conducted in four phases:

I. Phase One: Analysis of Plans

A content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980) of plans submitted to the Utah State Office of Education was used to identify key elements in career ladder plans. In addition, site visits and and exploratory interviews were used to identify four representative districts for case studies. Selection criteria used included the following:

-incentive features,
-number and kinds of career ladder steps,
-use of peers and parents,
-teacher evaluation techniques,
-nature of additional teacher assignments,
-ranges of involvement in plan formulation,
-remuneration approaches, and
-participant satisfaction

## II. Phase Two: Case Studies

Multi-phase case studies were used to investigate the implementation of the critical variables in target districts. Data were collected from different sources and different levels in the district to enable analysis described as "triangulation" by Denzen (1978).

Structured descriptive data were collected in the target districts. Procedures included non-participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, and review of other locally available information such as early drafts and support documents. Analysis packets (Rist, 1980) provided the coordination of data gathering across sites.

The first set of district interviews targeted the central office, including the superintendent, if available, district administrators, local teachers' organization officers and staff, representative parents, and community representatives. One interview focus was the political and organizational contexts which influenced formation of the particular career ladder system. Another focus was the actual functioning of the system from the district level.

The second set of district interviews provided a closer look at several schools within each district. At the study schools, information was gathered from the principal, teachers' organization representatives, and teachers at various grade levels or subject areas. Particular individuals interviewed included successful and unsuccessful career ladder applicants, and non-applicants.

The teacher interview sample for the target districts is shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2

District Sampling Procedures

| District | Size | Number Schools/Teachers | Features of Plan |
|---|---|---|---|
| Snow | Small | 1 Elementary (9)<br>1 Middle School (10)<br>1 High School (7)<br>Total 60 Teachers (26)* | Multiple Lines of Evidence in a Dossier System |
| Rural | Small | 1 Elementary (8)<br>1 Middle School (7)<br>1 High School (8)<br>Total 75 Teachers (23)* | Job Enlargement with Some Aspects of Merit |
| Suburban | Large | District:<br>65 schools<br>Pilot Schools:<br>1 Elementary (14)<br>1 Middle School (14)<br>1 High School (12)<br>Total 2,700 Teachers (40)* | Decentralized Plans with Local Autonomy |

Table 1.2 cont.

| District | Size | Number Schools/Teachers | Features of Plan |
|---|---|---|---|
| Urban | Intermediate | 16 Elementary (26)<br>5 Middle Schools (17)<br>3 High Schools (28)<br>Total 550 Teachers (71)* | Merit Focus with Self-Nomination and Administrator Ratings |

Note. * Number of teachers interviewed.

In addition, questionnaires were distributed in all districts except Urban. A copy of these questionnaires may be found in the appendices of this report.

III. Phase Three: District Level Analysis

In this phase of the research, the development and implementation procedures and problems in each target district were described. Data gathered through the district level case studies were analyzed and the structure and functioning of each district's career ladder plan was described.

IV. Phase Four: Cross-Site Analyses

Cross-site analyses focusing on similarities and differences among and between districts were conducted in this phase of the research. Emphasis here was placed on the identification of critical variables across and within sites that appeared to be related to successful career ladder functioning.

# CHAPTER TWO

## SNOW DISTRICT CAREER LADDER DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY

### General Description

Snow District is a small district in a rural setting encompassing 90 square miles. It is located 30 miles from Salt Lake City, Utah. Its three schools (a kindergarten-4th grade elementary, a 5th-8th grade middle school, and a 9th-12th grade high school) serve approximately 1,200 students. There are 61 full time teachers employed in the district and a limited administrative staff of one superintendent and three principals. The teaching staff is young, with the median age well below the Utah median age of 39. This is due primarily to recent growth in the district that resulted in the hiring of new (and young) teachers. Morale is good, and there is a general feeling not only within the teaching staff itself but also within the community at large that the teachers are both competent and above average. This positive perception of teachers stimulated the district to establish a career ladder plan that would reward the existing exemplary service of its teachers rather than assigning extra work duties to indicate excellence.

Although rural by location, Snow District is rapidly growing, has a high proportion of professionals, and is one of the wealthiest districts in the State. The impact of skiing and tourism is considerable. The community is extremely supportive

of its schools and teachers. For example, Snow District recently voted and passed a mill levy increase enabling them to raise teachers' salaries by 16%. The community has also demonstrated support by actively participating at board meetings and by volunteering technical assistance and resources for enrichment opportunities.

In general, teachers' salaries are higher than elsewhere in the State. This is due to the previously mentioned mill levy increase. The presence of these extra funds provided a climate in the district that fostered a spirit of experimentation in planning for career ladders. Rather than their being viewed as minimal allocation to be distributed equally, the career ladder funds were viewed as a resouce for potential change. With its large revenue base, Snow District has been able to use its career ladder money primarily for funding teacher promotion and for additional service responsibilities rather than for additional contract days. In this sense, the career ladder funds were considered to be above and beyond cost of living increases. This perception led to increased teacher flexibility in considering career ladder options during the planning process.

The small size of the district was both a hindrance and an advantage in the designing and implementation of their Career Ladder Plan. The small numbers of administrative staff and teachers necessitated that most work be accomplished by few people, and new duties and responsibilities strained the existing workforce. However, the district's small size also resulted in

fewer bureaucratic processes and increased cohesion. There seemed to be a very cooperative and nurturing attitude among teachers. Communication attempts and sharing efforts were frequent within schools, and this small size facilitated these communication efforts during the career ladder planning process. As drafts were formulated in the planning committee, key elements were shared in the schools, and reactions returned to the committee. This sharing not only helped shape the ultimate form of the plan but also served to keep teachers informed of committee decisions.

## The Career Ladder Plan

### History

The Snow District began early in February 1984 to formulate its Career Ladder Plan. In the planning phase the superintendent was integral to the process, acting as a non-directive leader who maintained momentum and helped with dates and drafts. The superintendent began this process by the formation of a career ladder planning committee. Desiring a wide-based committee representative of the school community, he invited all interested parties to participate on the committee. Letters were sent to school board members encouraging them to participate, and five joined the committee. Parents who had been active in the parent-school councils were invited to participate, and six parents volunteered. All three principals were included on the

committee, and in turn they appointed two teachers from their respective schools. The Teacher's Association also chose four additional teacher representatives for the committee. Two students were encouraged to participate, but their involvement was limited. The final committee was comprised of 27 people including five board members, one superintendent, three principals, ten teachers, six parents, and two students.

Although the planning committee was large, it was the superintendent's intent to have as much input as possible. Teachers comprised the largest committee component for two reasons. First, the Career Ladder Plan would have its strongest effect on teachers; therefore, teachers should have a high degree of input. Second, teacher involvement would promote the plan's legitimacy and acceptance.

## Prevailing Philosophy

Despite some initial negative attitudes toward career ladders, the committee took the positive stance of trying to design the best possible plan for the district. The committee thoroughly investigated all options and deliberately delayed their implementation to allow as much time as possible for further development of ideas.

The development of the plan was affected by the prevalent belief that Snow District had an exemplary teaching staff. It was expected that a majority of teachers would reach the top rung of any career ladder system. The committee thought that a quota

system limiting access to the top rungs would not only negatively impact the existing atmosphere of cooperation among teachers but would also be unfair. It was further decided that all outstanding teachers should be recognized and promoted based strictly on their teaching performance rather than their willingness to accept extra responsibilities. However, the plan did leave room for teachers to be compensated for additional service assignments.

The committee stated that the district's Career Ladder Plan should:

1. recognize and reward excellence in teaching,

2. attract and retain the best teaching talent,

3. provide opportunities for teacher advancement and promotion,

4. compensate teachers for additional assignments, and

5. make teacher salaries more competitive with other professionals.

Group Processes, Leadership, and Decision Making

Despite its large size the committee operated in an informal style with a consensus approach to decision-making. The

eventually adopted plan evolved from the group with equal opportunity for input from everyone. No one person controlled the group or provided all the leadership. The superintendent did act as an informal leader, scheduling and organizing meetings, contacting participants, and writing up drafts and notes of the proceedings. He often started the group and kept participants on task, but he did not dominate the process. He was flexible, listened to others' ideas, and allowed teachers to shape the plan.

The committee initially divided itself into several small working groups. Each group presented a sample plan to the whole committee for discussion. Plans were consolidated and reworked until an overall first draft emerged. Between meetings committee members reported back to the interest groups they represented. At the next meeting the draft was discussed, revised, and improved. The actual plan to emerge was the committee's eighth draft. Discussion was vigorous during all meetings as teachers became the strongest faction in the planning sessions and were the most visible and vocal at some of the later meetings. However, all decisions were made by consensus. Parents were generally supportive of the teachers' position. Parents were not as vocal as others, but they did serve in a "watch dog" capacity. It was generally felt that the presence of parents helped to keep everyone on task and to encourage professional behavior.

The administrators in the group took more of a hands-off facilitative role. The general perception was that the plan was

to be a teacher-led plan with major input from that source.

The committee size dwindled as the months progressed, but all members received summaries of preceding meetings so they could have input if they desired. In general the group met weekly for several months with sessions averaging two hours.

## Resources

The planning committee utilized many resources in the formation of its own plan. Foremost among these was a class on teacher evaluation taught by a professor from the University of Utah. This class provided information on methods of teacher evaluation and the experiences of career ladder programs nationally. In addition to the training, the class also created a common information base helping to bridge the gap between administrators and teachers. (The evaluation class was funded by a planning and development grant from the United States Office of Education.)

A second resource was information provided by career ladder drafts from other districts statewide. Projects from other states were obtained and studied, including the Tennessee plan. Information was supplied by the Professional Society of Superintendents, the Utah Instructional Leadership Academy, and the director of Eastern Uniserve (a UEA organization). Several committee members were also able to provide insights into private business evaluation practices.

## Structural Features Of The Plan

Approximately $50,000 was allocated to fund the district's Career Ladder plan. Structurally, the plan featured three main components (see Appendix 2-1). First, one additional contract day was financed with $8,000 of the district's Career Ladder money. This additional time was to be used for evening parent-teacher conferences. With the added day, the school year was extended to 185 days. This additional contract day was in addition to nine extra days funded by the increased mill levy. A second component of the plan focused on promotion of those teachers whose performance was exemplary. Funding for this component was set at $22,000. The third part of the plan involved additional service assignments such as participation on various committees, teacher proposals, etc. A total of $20,000 was available for these assigments.

### Promotion Component

This part of the plan featured three levels: certified teacher, associate teacher, and senior teacher. Certified teachers were identified as teachers who chose not to be evaluated through the plan. Associate teachers were identified as those faculty members who were eligible to apply and did so successfully. In order to be eligible to apply for a promotion to associate teacher, a candidate must have had one full year of teaching experience in the district with no less than three years total teaching experience. The third level, senior teacher, was attainable by those teachers who underwent a more stringent evaluative process. To be successful at this level, the teacher must have had three formal reviews where ratings of

"contributing, well functioning" had been achieved. Additionally, the teacher must have been given at least two "exemplary" ratings to qualify. However, because of time lines involved with the 1984-85 Career Ladder plan, the only level given consideration was that of promotion to associate teacher.

## The Teacher Dossier

A dossier prepared by those teachers expressing an interest in promotion was the primary vehicle used in the evaluation process. From the outset, the planning committee stressed that it would be the teacher's responsibility to prepare the dossier. However, the district did provide support services to those teachers who wanted help in preparing their dossiers. The Teacher Oversight Committee (an additional service assignment committee funded by Career Ladder money) served this role. The responsibility of this committee was to provide consultation regarding questions teachers had with the dossier system as well as support and encouragement when needed.

Teachers were instructed to present their abilities in the best possible light using only credible and reliable lines of evidence. Among these lines of evidence were: principal evaluations, parent and student evaluation surveys, student achievement, attainment of teacher-set performance goals, peer reviews of educational materials, evidence of leadership, district service, and personal educational advances. The decision to include any line of evidence was dependent upon the teacher's personal judgement; none were specifically required.

## Promotion of Teachers

When a teacher was ready to be reviewed for promotion, they voluntarily applied to the Promotion Review Board. This panel, funded by Career Ladder money at the rate of $1,000 for each teacher participant, consisted of two administrators, four teachers, and two community representatives. The group of four teachers was composed of one teacher from each of the three schools plus another teacher from an applicant's particular building. The district decided that teachers would be allowed to present applications for serious review no more frequently than once every two years. Once a teacher was promoted, the appointment was considered permanent. However, in order to maintain that status, the teacher would have to be reviewed at least once every five years after the appointment. In the first year of implementation 43 teachers applied for promotion and 40 were promoted.

## Additional Service Responsibilities

Additional service assignments were distinguished from the promotion levels by their temporary nature and by the extra responsibilities that were entailed. Generally, assignments lasted for one year or less. For the 1984-85 school year, the additional responsibilities teachers could undertake included service as a curriculum writer, curriculum committee chairperson, test developer, departmental chair or grade level leader. Teachers also qualified for additional service assignments by developing their own proposals for projects. For 1984-85 priority was given to the development of a district *curriculum* scope and

sequence guide plus a criterion-referenced testing program. Another priority was to increase the level of coordination and cooperation between the computer science, language arts, math, science, and social studies departments.

Two other additional service assignments were available. These involved service on one of two committees involved in the implementation of the district's Career Ladder program. These committees were the Promotion Review Board (mentioned earlier in the Teacher Dossier section of this report) and the Teacher Oversight Committee (also mentioned earlier in the Promotion of Teachers section of this report). The responsibility of the Promotion Review Board was to oversee all activities associated with promotion including the evaluation of dossiers. Three openings on this committee were filled by teachers with the other four being filled by two administrators and two community representatives. The responsibility of the Teacher Oversight Committee, as previously mentioned, was to advise teachers on the preparation of their dossiers, to act as advocates for careful, accurate evaluations, and to assist any teachers who wished to appeal any aspect of their evaluation. This committee was composed of a minimum of one teacher from each school.

## Teacher Perceptions of The System

Teachers in the elementary, middle, and high school were given the opportunity to respond to a series of questions designed to assess their perceptions concerning how the career ladder program was working in the district. The interview

questions may be found in Appendix 2-2. A representative sample of 26 teachers was used. Of the 26, nine were from the elementary school, ten were from the middle school, and seven were from the high school.

Teachers in each school were asked how long they had been teaching as well as how many years they had been teaching in Snow District. The results are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Years of Teaching Experience for Faculty

| | ELEM | | MIDDLE | | HS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Median | Mean | Median | Mean | Median |
| Total Years | 10.7 | 12.0 | 8.4 | 6.5 | 14.0 | 12.0 |
| Yrs. In Snow | 7.0 | 8.0 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 5.1 | 3.0 |

Note. All Teachers (Means only) Total Years: 10.7 Years in District: 5.5

## Teacher Knowledge of the System

Teachers were asked how informed they were about the district's Career Ladder program. Results are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Knowledge of the Career Ladder Program

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTALS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Well-Informed | 6 | 10 | 4 | 20 |
| Somewhat | 3 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| Not At All | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

These results indicate that most of the teachers interviewed thought they were well-informed concerning the Career Ladder

plan.

## Sources of Information For Faculty Members

Teachers were asked if they had partcipated in the 30-hour inservice conducted by a professor from the University of Utah's Department of Educational Studies. Of the 26 teachers interviewed 13 attended the inservice meetings, 11 did not attend, and two started but dropped out. Of the teachers interviewed, participation was highest among middle school teachers where eight of the ten attended. Attendance was lowest among high school teachers where only one out of the seven teachers interviewed attended the meetings.

The teachers interviewed were asked where they received information concerning the Career Ladder program. Most teachers obtained information through several sources. 13 teachers received information through discussion with peers, ten received information through informal meetings with the professor mentioned above, and nine indicated that they learned about the program through a class offered by the University of Utah. These were the most common responses. Other sources mentioned were: through handouts in the mailbox (7), district-wide meetings (5), from participation on committees (5), personal research (3), from the state's career ladder guidelines (2), rumors (2), and Career Ladder plans from other districts (1).

Teachers were asked to assess how effective the on-going dissemination of information was in the district. Table 2.3 summarizes teachers' opinions.

Table 2.3

**Effectiveness of the Dissemination of Information**

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Effective | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Adequate/Fair | 3 | 5 | 3 | 11 |
| Poor | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| No Opinion | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |

Most teachers interviewed thought the dissemination process was fair to poor. Note that even though eight middle school teachers attended the initial in-service meeting, only one teacher (who may or may not have attended the in-service) thought the dissemination process was effective. Comments ranged from:

> I didn't receive as much information as I needed. It turned into a very long year because we didn't know what was expected of us. The only reason I know enough now is from getting it all together and going through the process. There was very little guidance.

To this:

> It was very effective, we had Career Ladder meetings approximately every two weeks. We knew exactly what was going on.

A teacher made this comment regarding participation by the University of Utah:

> Fair. I had some problems of not receiving information in time on how to develop specific kinds of evidence and certain deadlines.

Another teacher said this:

> I feel it's been effective. Dr. X has been a big help to get us on our feet. We've made some blunders, part of those being rules changing in mid-stream, but the info was disclosed.

Overall, there were many questions which needed to be dealt with. The number of faculty members and the diverse needs which they presented served to complicate the task. The results indicated that teachers in the district thought that a better job could have been done in satisfying their informational needs in these areas.

## Extended Contract Days

During the next portion of the interview teachers were asked to discuss their thoughts concerning the extended contract day portion of the district's Career Ladder plan. Specifically, they were asked to comment on the number (how many extended days should be in the contract) and the placement (when during the school year should they occur) of the days.

Teacher response was so varied that no clear themes emerged. It is possible to say that a great deal of confusion exists as to what the district's policy was. As a result, teachers had a difficult time formulating specific opinions regarding these issues.

The most prevalent response (five out of 28 answers) to the question was that the concept of extended days is a good one. The response of teachers in this district was much the same as teachers in other districts. Most were positive toward being paid for work which had previously been done for no pay. The second most prevalent response (four out of 28 answers) concerned the use of extended days. These teachers were concerned that the days would be used for inservice meetings as opposed to being used as the teachers saw fit.

Teachers were asked to comment on how the extended days portion of the Career Ladder plan might be improved. Teachers found it easier to offer general suggestions rather than comment on the specifics of the plan. Eight teachers thought that the plan might be improved by making sure that the use of the days would be determined by the teachers and not administrators or other district personnel. Six teachers suggested that the days be used for teacher and classroom preparation prior to the start of the school year. Four teachers thought that the extended days portion of the district's career ladder plan would be best improved through increased communication regarding the nature and function of the days. Three teachers thought that teachers should have more input in developing future guidelines concerning how the days were to be used. Two teachers thought that the inclusion of inservice activities during extended days would be an improvement. Another suggestion offered by two teachers was to use a day at the end of each term for report card preparation and planning.

## Additional Service Assignments

Teachers were asked if they had participated on any of the additional service assignment committees. The responses are summarized in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Teacher Participation in Additional Service Assignments

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extra Duties | 3 | 7 | 4 | 14 |
| No Extra Duties | 5 | 3 | 3 | 11 |
| Application Rejected | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

Teachers who indicated that they had not served on a committee were asked if they would have wanted to be on one. Results are shown in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5

Attitudes of Non-Participating Teachers on Committees

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Desired to Participate | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| No Desire to Particpate | 3 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| Unsure | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |

Those who wanted to participate thought that they had valuable input to lend to a committee. Those who had no desire to participate thought that committees usually are ineffective and/or they did not want to get involved in any political situations.

Teachers were then asked if their committee experiences were positive. The results are shown in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6

Attitudes toward Committee Experiences

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| Negative | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Undecided | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Stressful | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

These results indicate that most teachers who participated on additional service assignment committees had positive experiences. One teacher commented on the Promotion Review Board:

> It was excellent. I got to see how teachers function and got to see what was happening. I'm sorry they all [all teachers] didn't get a chance to be on that committee.

Teachers who did not have good experiences thought that either the guidelines for what the committee was supposed to accomplish were too loose or that the work of the committee was unnecessary. A teacher serving on the Science and Curriculum Revision committee had this to say:

> It's been miserable. We have no idea what we're supposed to do.

Teachers who served on a district committee were asked to comment on how effectively the group functioned. Their answers are summarized in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7

Effectiveness of the District Committee Performance

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Functioned Well | 3 | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| Functioned Poorly | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Unsure | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

The results indicate that most teachers who were interviewed thought that the committees on which they served functioned effectively.

## Clarity and Fairness of the Committee Selection Process

Teachers were asked whether they thought the selection process used for determining committee assignments was clear and/or fair. Results are shown in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8

Fairness of the Committee Selection Process

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clear and Fair | 2 | 9 | 4 | 15 |
| Not Clear and Fair | 6 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| Unsure | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

Most teachers thought that the selection process was clear and/or fair. However, note that the elementary school was an exception. Only two of nine teachers interviewed thought the selection process was clear and/or fair. One elementary teacher had this to say about the process:

> No definitely not. It appeared that there was a lot of district favoritism of people who ended up on the committees. People who did apply who did not get to be on some were never told why or they were used in other capacities. A lot of people were bitter about that.

## The Promotion Component

Teachers were asked if they chose to apply for the promotion step of the district's Career Ladder program. The answers to this queston are summarized in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9

Number of Teachers who Chose to Apply for Promotion

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 9 | 10 | 5 | 24 |
| No | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |

Results from this question indicate that the great majority of teachers interviewed opted for promotion. It is noteworthy however, that fewer teachers from the high school chose to apply.

When asked to give reasons why they opted for promotion, teachers gave a variety of responses. The most common response focused on money. Twelve teachers said that this was their primary reason for applying. One teacher said it this way:

> Honestly, it was the cash involved. As a teacher I can't throw away the opportunity to make more money...

Twelve teachers responded that fear and/or peer pressure was a motivating factor. These teachers thought that they might receive some form of retribution from the district or the scorn of their peers if they didn't apply. One of these teachers specifically mentioned pressure from the district as a motivating factor. This comment was quite representative:

> Fear. What would the administration have said had I not applied? So, I felt I had to do it to show I had nothing to hide. They laid it out as an option and a privilege to earn this money and that it would be well worth your time, which it wasn't because of the problems that developed. They made it sound like everybody should do it if you were eligble. That was the fear,intimidation.

Several other reasons were popular as well. Status and recognition were mentioned by six teachers as their main reasons for applying. Six other teachers said that they believed themselves to be qualified so they applied. One of these teachers

said this:

> I'm a good teacher, and I want to avail myself to the program. No pressure from administrators or peers, I just wanted to avail myself to the program.

Six others wanted to be a part of the system and get in on the ground floor hoping to receive some form of long-term benefits. Three said that it seemed easy enough to do, and therefore it was to their advantage to apply. Two said they applied simply out of curiosity. Other reasons mentioned by at least one teacher were: pride in competition, a positive mind-set toward career ladders in general, and the system as a method for self-evaluation.

The Dossier System

Teachers were asked if they thought the dossier system adopted by the district was a good way to document good teaching. Results for this question are summarized in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10

The Dossier System As Documentation of Good Teaching

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Good Way | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| Not a Good Way | 5 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| Unsure | 1 | 6 | 2 | 9 |
| No Response | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

Results indicate that teachers were ambivalent toward the dossier system as a means of documenting good teaching. These thoughts were common in all the schools, while being strongest in the elementary school where a majority (five out of nine) of teachers disliked the dossier system. Those that disliked the system thought that what was in the dossier did not always accurately

represent what is practiced in the classroom. A teacher had this to say:

> No, it's not complete. It's enough to give some indication of relative skill and professionalism, but it doesn't measure what you actually do in the classroom. I'm convinced it's possible to get good parent and student reports and not be a good teacher.

Another teacher in the elementary spoke of the dossier system this way:

> No. Lines of evidence are not valid or reliable or relevant. We were told that the student and parent reviews would be a controlled situation because the University [of Utah] would come in and handle it. What I feel they failed to look at was that there are lots of ways to manipulate this, and we have seen this happen... Teachers knew when it would happen and worked to elicit a favorable response...

Teachers who favored the dossier system made comments like this:

> I feel as though I was able to give a good picture of what I do. As far as the dossier system itself, I feel positive about it.

And this:

> The accuracy of my dossier was very good. My lines of evidence were very valid. I feel the dossier system is a good and fair system, but there are many bugs to be worked out.

Teachers were asked to discuss the kinds of problems they encountered in preparing their dossiers. The most common response among teachers from all three schools (9) was a lack of help, unclear guidelines, and unclear directions on how to prepare the dossier. This response was particularly common with the elementary and middle school teachers interviewed. One of the teachers responded this way:

> [The problem was] never really knowing how to do it. You think you know, then rumors float, and it became very important how the dossier looked rather than content.

In the high school, time needed to put the dossier together was most commonly cited as the biggest difficulty. Teachers in the elementary and middle school also mentioned that time needed to prepare the dossiers was a problem.

Several other factors emerged regarding this question. One problem in the elementary school was the perception that at times assistance was given from the University of Utah which seemed contradictory. Advisors from the University seemed to contradict one another when advising teachers on how to prepare the dossier. Two elementary teachers experienced problems because of perceived rule changes midway through the process. Two teachers thought that the waiting process to receive feedback regarding promotion created unneeded stress. One teacher mentioned that preparation of the dossier took too much time away from classroom activities. A response which was unique to the elementary school was that the model dossier system was inadequate. Four teachers gave this response. One of those responses was:

> I was very critical about the dummy [model] dossier. I would have been ashamed to hand something like that in, so we essentially had to start from scratch...

In the middle school, teachers mentioned several problems which the elementary teachers brought up. Unique to teachers from the middle school who were interviewed was the perception that the Promotion Review Board made unclear and/or contradictory interpretations of their dossiers. Two teachers mentioned that preparation of the dossiers took too much time away from classroom activities. One teacher explained it this way:

> Assembling the dossier cut into effective lesson planning time...I've done some of the poorest lessons I've ever done because of this. I feel bad about it.

One other teacher mentioned that the quality of feedback from the University of Utah on dossier preparation had created problems:

> One of the problems I ran into was getting feedback from the University. I knew people were misinterpreting the info in my packet and not looking at it the way I used the material.

One of the teachers also mentioned, as had several elementary teachers, that the waiting process for feedback on promotion was stressful.

High school teachers reported the fewest number of problems (apart from time management) in putting the dossier together. As mentioned previously, the time needed to prepare the dossier was the major difficulty mentioned by this group. Two other issues were mentioned. These were a lack of help and stringent guidelines plus difficulty in dealing with parents in obtaining parent surveys.

Teachers were also asked to give an approximation of how much time it took them to prepare their dossiers. Responses to this question were predictably quite varied. The number of hours required for preparation ranged from fewer than five hours to 100 hours. The number of hours each teacher spent preparing his/her dossier is detailed in Table 2.11.

Table 2.11

Number of Hours Spent by Teachers Preparing Dossiers

| HOURS | 0-5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 21-25 | 26-30 | 35 | 40 | 45 | 50 | 60 | 75 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ELEM | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| MIDDLE | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| HS | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The most common time frames were: five teachers worked between 11 and 15 hours on their dossiers, four teachers worked 21 to 25 hours, and three teachers worked approximately 35 hours. One worked 100 hours and two worked 50 hours. Two teachers worked five hours or less.

The mean number of hours spent preparing the dossiers was 34 per teacher. The median number of hours was approximately 26. The mean and median number of hours teachers in each school required to prepare their dossiers is detailed in Table 2.12.

Table 2.12

Mean and Median Number of Hours Spent Preparing Dossiers

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mean Number of Hours | 38 | 33 | 15 |
| Median Number of Hours | 40 | 26 | 13 |

The data indicate that high school teachers spent less time preparing their dossiers (a median rate of approximately 13 hours) than the elementary or middle school teachers. Elementary school teachers required the most time to prepare their dossiers (a median rate of 40 hours). For middle school teachers, the median rate for dossier preparation was approximately 26 hours.

Improvements Suggested For The Dossier System

Teachers were asked how they might improve the dossier

component of the promotion process. Again, many responses were obtained. Three suggestions occurred most often. Six teachers (three elementary and three middle school) thought that standardized guidelines accompanied by strict deadlines should be an integral part of the process. Five teachers (three middle and two elementary school) thought that exact criteria and an acceptable point system should be incorporated into the process. Five teachers (two high school, two elementary, and one middle school) thought that the use of highly trained, outside and independent observers instead of district personnel would create a more fair dossier evaluation system. Three teachers (two high school and one elementary) thought that district personnel should perform the compiling, typing, and reproduction of dossier materials. Their reasoning was that this would provide a uniform format and take less time away from classroom duties for teachers. In a similar vein, three teachers ( two middle and one elementary school) thought that the dossier system could be improved by eliminating the possibility of teachers turning the dossier into a "work of art" type project. Two teachers (one each from the elementary and middle school) thought that the inclusion of systematic classroom observation would improve the content of dossier information. Two teachers (one each from the elementary and middle school) thought that the only improvement would be to eliminate the dossier system altogether. Two teachers (both from the high school) thought that a greater number of more stringently defined lines of evidence would make the dossier system more valid. Two teachers (one middle and one high school) thought that improved communication between candidates and the

evaluators would help the system. They thought that too many rumors got started in the present system.

Comments made by other teachers were: keep the rules consistent, make the dossier more valid, remove the student surveys, remove the parent surveys, remove test scores, provide release time from class in order to work on the dossiers, and notify candidates personally at home regarding all promotion decisions.

Teachers were asked whether the process of putting the dossiers together gave them an opportunity to think about their teaching. The question was designed to give teachers an opportunity to discuss how valuable and constructive the process of putting the dossier together was for them. Table 2.13 summarizes teacher responses.

Table 2.13

Benefits Received from Assembling Dossiers

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Valuable | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Somewhat Valuable | 3 | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| Mixed Response | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| Not Valuable | 4 | 7 | 0 | 11 |

The results indicate that while some teachers derived some benefit from the process, most teachers interviewed did not find it to be a valuable experience personally. This was particularly true in the middle school where seven did not derive any personal benefit and eight of ten respondents either did not care for the process or could not pinpoint any important benefits. Most

teachers looked upon the process as a means to an end--a necessary step to be taken when applying for promotion. One teacher voiced this opinion:

> I found it mostly an effort of self-congratulation. It made me feel good about what I'm doing, but it didn't offer any suggestions as to how I ought to modify, which is a weakness in this system.

A teacher who thought that the process had been rewarding said this:

> Yes, I thought it was a good process for reflection. It pointed out some areas where I need to improve.

Teachers were asked if they would use any of the dossier information to change their teaching practices. Almost all teachers thought that they would not use the information contained in the dossiers such as student surveys, parent surveys, and grade reports to alter the way they practiced. Only two teachers thought that they would make changes related to information contained in the dossier. However, several teachers thought that they would continue to emphasize practices that were a part of the dossier system. Three teachers said they would continue to use pre- and post-testing techniques. Three teachers said they would continue to work with data obtained from student surveys. Most teachers (18) simply said no--it would not change their practice. Some comments were quite sarcastic and negative in nature:

> No, it will teach me to hide things and be more clever. What I think it is doing is making teachers be dishonest not only with themselves but with their whole outlook on teaching.

Teacher Oversight Committee

Teachers were asked if the Teacher Oversight Committee had

given helpful assistance in preparing the dossiers. The answers to this question are summarized in Table 2.14.

Table 2.14

Helpfulness of the Teacher Oversight Committee

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Helpful | 7 | 3 | 3 | 13 |
| Not Helpful | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| Did Not Need Help | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| Unaware of Committee | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |

The results indicate most teachers who were interviewed thought that the Oversight Committee had rendered assistance in helping them prepare their dossiers. A high school teacher gave this response:

> Yes, ours [Oversight Committee] checked through it [the dossier] before we handed it in. Their comments were positive and and not critical. They were well informed.

Another teacher said this:

> Very diligent and concerned. If they didn't know something, they found it out.

Teachers who did not consult the Oversight Committee responded in this manner:

> No, I went to people on the staff I felt comfortable with.

Promotion Review Board

Teachers were asked if they thought the Promotion Review Board was functioning in an effective manner. Answers to this question are seen in Table 2.15.

Table 2.15

Effectiveness of the Promotion Review Board

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 2 | 4 | 4 | 10 |
| No | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Mixed | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| No Opinion | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 |

The results show that most teachers interviewed in the district thought that the Promotion Review Board was functioning in an effective manner. This was not the case however, in the elementary school where seven of nine teachers interviewed were either unsure or did not think that the panel had done an effective job. One of these teachers had this to say:

> No, it isn't [functioning effectively]. They compared dossiers when they weren't supposed to. Personal biases came into it. Religious, economic, long-term hatreds, and political biases.

Most teachers who thought that the panel functioned effectively responded this way:

> I think so. It hasn't been an easy job, and they have received a lot of static. They've been dedicated, took the class, put in a lot of hours, and wanted it to work.

Another teacher from the high school said this:

> I believe that was a highly professional, objective group of people...From what I can see, any faults lie with the people who didn't get promoted. They handled it in a childish and unprofessional manner.

Number of Teachers Being Promoted

Teachers were asked if they thought the number and percentage of people being promoted was appropriate. The answers

to this question are summarized in Table 2.16.

Table 2.16

Number of Teachers Being Promoted

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Right Amount | 3 | 5 | 0 | 8 |
| Too High | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Ban Quotas | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Unsure | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 |

The results reflect ambivalence concerning how the system was working:

> I don't think you can set anything as right. No quota here is positive, but we've also heard that for a system to work, some people have to fail.

More teachers were not sure about how many should be promoted than those who thought the number being promoted was just right. The number of teachers who disliked the idea of a certain number of teachers being promoted almost equalled the number of teachers who thought that the number being promoted was just right. Few teachers thought the number was too high. It should be noted that the interviews were being conducted late in the school year when teachers were finding out if they had been promoted. Out of 43 teachers who submitted dossiers, 40 were promoted.

Suggestions for Improving The Promotion Component

Teachers were asked about how the promotion process could be improved. The response given most often (seven teachers--three elementary, three middle, and one high school) was that the district should recruit trained, independent evaluators to serve on the Promotion Review Board. Six teachers (three elementary,

one middle, and two high school) thought that more specific criteria to guide panel decisions were needed. Four teachers (two elementary, one middle, and one high school) suggested that teachers be given more feedback on why they were or were not promoted. Three teachers (two elementary and one middle school) thought that the district should hold an election of sorts to determine who should serve on the Board. Three teachers (one from each school) suggested that a system be designed to meet the needs of those teachers who were not successful in the promotion process. Two teachers (one each from the elementary and middle schools) thought that the Board members should receive some sort of formal training in evaluation. Two teachers (both elementary school) thought that the candidates should be notified privately of promotion decisions. Other comments made by one teacher were: expand the ways in which evaluations are performed, perform systematic observations in the classrooms, take all names off the dossiers to create anonymity, assure confidentiality for individuals who are not promoted, make the whole process more of a positive learning experience for teachers, and eliminate the promotion component entirely and put the money into extra work for extra pay assignments.

## Effects of the Career Ladder Program on Professional Relations

Teachers were asked to discuss whether or not they perceived any effects on relationships with each other as a result of the district's Career Ladder program. Answers to this question are summarized in Table 2.17.

Table 2.17

Effects of the Career Ladder Program on Teacher Relations

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Effects | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Negative Effects | 9 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| Positive and Negative | 1 | 5 | 0 | 6 |
| No Effects | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 |

The data indicate that most teachers interviewed perceived that negative effects were more common than positive effects. However, different response patterns occurred in each of the three schools. Of the elementary teachers interviewed, almost all perceived negative effects on relations among teachers. Not one teacher interviewed perceived any positive effects occurring. An elementary teacher said this in response to the question:

> We had a meeting with the school board a week or two ago. I have never seen hostilities before when one would stand up and say they thought it was great and four others would stand up and say you are full of it... It was dividing the district right in that meeting...

Most middle school teachers perceived good and bad effects on relations and four teachers thought that good effects were noticeable. Most responded this way:

> High anxiety. Yet, I think this school has been unique in that we have worked together; we're not afraid to ask for help.

In the high school, all teachers who responded to the question thought that the career ladder program has had no effect on relations among teachers.

Most of the teachers interviewed were aware that problems had occurred in the elementary school, due to the fact that two

teachers had failed to be promoted. There was some degree of curiosity and rumor concerning what was going on in the elementary school among many teachers from the middle and high schools. These teachers perceived that the problems stemmed from teacher discomfort with the plan, philosophical differences among teachers, and marked differences of opinion with administrators and members of the Promotion Review Board concerning who was and who was not promoted.

Effects on Relations Between Administrators and Teachers

Teachers were asked if they perceived any effects on relations between administrators and teachers as a result of the Career Ladder program. Results are seen in Table 2.18.

Table 2.18

Effects of the Career Ladder Program on Relations Between Teachers and Administrators

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Effects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Negative Effects | 5 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| No Changes | 3 | 10 | 6 | 19 |
| Unsure | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Most teachers who responded to the question perceived little change in the way they were relating to administrators. The most negative response came from elementary teachers where five of the six teachers thought that there had been negative effects. An elementary teacher described the effects this way:

> The tension between principals and teachers is worse now than it was before. Career Ladders was the final show.

All of the middle school teachers interviewed thought that there

had been no effects on relations between administrators and teachers. Six out of seven high school teachers interviewed perceived no change in relations either. Many of these teachers responded this way:

> No, there are too many other variables involved. The administrator hasn't been identified closely with it in this school.

Relations Between Career Ladder and Non-Career Ladder Teachers

Teachers were asked if they perceived any effects on relations between colleagues who submitted dossiers and colleagues who did not submit dossiers. Results are summarized in Table 2.19.

Table 2.19

Effects on Relations Between Career Ladder and Non-Career Ladder Teachers

| | ELEM | MIDDLE | HS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Effects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Negative Effects | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| No Changes | 8 | 7 | 6 | 21 |
| Unsure | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |

The vast majority of teachers interviewed (21 out of 27) perceived little change in relations between teachers who submitted dossiers and those who did not. Out of 61 teachers in the district, 43 submitted dossiers. Only one teacher perceived negative effects. Most teachers responded like this:

> No, not in this school. This is a professional staff here.

Relations Between Teachers Who Were Promoted and Those Who Were Not Promoted

Teachers were asked if they perceived any effects on relations between colleagues who were promoted and those who were not promoted. In the elementary school, several teachers who submitted dossiers were not promoted. When asked this question, three teachers said that they were aware of very bad experiences between teachers on the Promotion Review Board and colleagues who were not promoted. One teacher had this to say:

> Real bad feelings--more between people who weren't promoted and those on the Promotion Review Board. I don't think the people who didn't pass resent me for passing, I think they resent the people who failed them anonymously, without reason. One person pressured them for reasons and they said 'I can't remember exactly why you failed but it seems to me you just didn't have enough evidence there...'

Four elementary teachers said that these decisions created hurt feelings among all teachers in the elementary school. One of the elementary teachers described the situation this way:

> It hurt to see colleagues not make it. The people here are feeling people, and even with the money in their pockets, they are hurting. The ones not promoted are probably closer to the promoted ones because the promoted ones have come on their side. They feel for them; they understand.

Four teachers perceived that a sympathetic outreach attempt was made toward unsuccessful candidates by those who were promoted. Consider this response:

> It's caused a large support group. People have come to the aid of the persons with sympathy and the desire to help them through the appeals. There was anger on the part of those that did pass that a person who was equally as good didn't. It made them question the entire system.

One teacher perceived no changes in relations between successful

and unsuccessful candidates.

## Long-Term Effects of Career Ladders

Teachers were asked if they thought teaching as a profession would experience any long-term effects as a result of career ladders. The most common response (eight teachers) thought that there would not be any long term effects because career ladders would not last long enough. Eight teachers thought that the long-term effects would be unhealthy and divisive competition among teachers which would produce negative outcomes. Two teachers thought that an increased attrition rate from the field would occur because teachers would become fed up with career ladder systems.

Several teachers thought that positive long-term outcomes would be realized. Four teachers thought that there would be an influx of money into the profession which would make teaching a more important (i.e., higher social status) profession. Two teachers thought that positive long-term effects would occur because as the systems develop more precise evaluation methods will occur as well.

## Suggestions for Improving The System

Teachers were given the opportunity to discuss what kinds on improvements they would like to see incorporated into the district's Career Ladder plan. A wide variety of responses were obtained. Most suggestions centered on the dossier and the Promotion Review Board.

Six teachers thought that better rules and guidelines for governing the dossier component of the plan were needed. It was

thought that these changes would aid teachers in choosing appropriate lines of evidence. Several teachers thought that the criteria for lines of evidence should be tightened and made more stringent in an effort to standardize the process and create a more objective evaluation process. One teacher thought that more lines should be developed so that teachers would have more options in developing the dossier. This would increase the chances of creating the best possible dossier.

Three teachers thought that outside observers trained in evaluation methods would be better able to objectively evaluate candidates for promotions. Three teachers suggested that the plan might work better if a process was developed to provide feedback and assistance for those teachers who were not promoted. Apart from bringing in outside observers to serve on this panel, three teachers thought that if teachers from the district would be on the Board, they should receive more training in evaluation than is presently given. Additionally, more clear-cut criteria should be developed to govern the selection of district teachers who serve on the panel. Two teachers suggested that any teachers on the Board should be selected by their colleagues and not by the administration. Two teachers thought that the Board could make more accurate evaluations by placing more emphasis on classroom visits. One teacher suggested that all dossiers received by the Promotion Review Board be anonymous. One teacher suggested that a transition team should be set up from year to year to help train incoming participants on the Board.

There were other suggestions as well. Two teachers thought

that a forum should be developed to deal with a perceived teacher distrust of career ladder systems in general. One teacher suggested that increased funding would be an improvement. One teacher thought that input from the University of Utah should be eliminated. Five teachers recommended either a suspension of the district's Career Ladder activities until more research is done, an overhaul of the entire system due to unfairness, or a complete cancellation of a Career Ladder program in the district.

These results indicate that teachers in the district had a somewhat negative attitude toward the Career Ladder system as it existed in their district. This sentiment seems strongest in the elementary school where conflicts arose over several teachers not being awarded promotions. The middle school and high school teachers interviewed were less negative than elementary teachers toward the plan as a whole, but in general most teachers did not care for the system. However, several teachers in the high school praised the plan as being a step in the right direction for teaching as a profession. Most teachers agreed that, when compared with plans from other districts, their district's plan was a better one. Despite the presence of teachers who perceived the plan as being positive, most teachers found some kind of fault with the system. Most of the concern centered around the specifics of the dossier system and how the Promotion Review Board went about evaluating the dossiers.

# CHAPTER THREE

## RURAL DISTRICT CAREER LADDER DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY

### General Description

This district is a smaller district within a rural Utah mountain community. Patrons are drawn from the immediate community as well as outlying farming areas. A population base of several thousand people is supported mainly by farming, ranching, and dairy production. Some residents also commute to and from larger cities to take advantage of other varied economic opportunities. Within an hour's drive are three larger cities, all with state universities which offer teacher training opportunities and ongoing educational research. The close proximity of these cities and the post-secondary institutions is a plus for the district, because this proximity allows teachers to commute. Teachers have the opportunity to further their education without the inconveniences of long travel or relocation.

The community, perhaps because of its size and location, is tightly knit, conservative, and religious. In this sense, the community is in step with the values and customs of Utah society at large. According to the teachers, the tightly knit atmosphere of the town provides advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, the setting and relaxed pace contribute to cohesion and unity among the faculty as well as the perception that the district is unique and fun to work in. On the other hand, the small size and

conservative nature of the community can create awkward situations for teachers who have inevitable conflicts with parents. Additionally, those who do not maintain the status quo of the community or those who, because of personal principle, do not embrace ideas widely shared in the schools may be viewed as pariahs.

The school board consists of local business leaders and several educators from both the State Office of Education and one of the nearby post-secondary institutions. The district's career ladder program was granted funds totalling $65,000.

The three schools in the district serve approximately 1500 students. This figure was down approximately 1.5% from the previous school year. Almost 98% of the students are Caucasian. The elementary school, with approximately 600 students, consists of grades Kindergarten through 5th. The middle school and high school each have approximately 450 students. The administration for each school consists of one principal with a part time vice principal at the high school level.

The faculty at all three schools consists of approximately 80 teachers. All of these teachers are Caucasian. There are an equal number of male and female teachers in the district. The average tenure in the district among faculty members is approximately 12 years. For the 23 teachers interviewed in this project, the average tenure is 14 years.

## The Career Ladder Plan

### History

The size of the district was an asset in the planning process. Because of the small size, a larger and therefore more representative sample of parents, teachers, and administrators were involved in the planning process. One of the nearby local colleges also entered into the process by starting a research and training project concerned with career ladder processes. This research was started during the 1983-84 school year. Approximately 40% of the district's administrators and teachers agreed to participate in the project. Another local university conducted workshops on evaluation methods and procedures. Much of this information was viewed as being a key to the development of the district's evaluation and selection procedures which would be used with the career ladder candidates. It is significant to note that the teachers' organization was well represented in the planning process because of the abundant teacher participation in the activities initiated by the post-secondary institutions.

### Prevailing Philosophy

The fundamental tenets of the district's Career Ladder Plan stressed the desire to recognize the outstanding qualitites of good teachers. These teachers should also receive additional financial remuneration for their exemplary performance. The evaluation and selection process would be unique for each school within the district. Outcomes associated with the career ladder

would not affect in any way the existing yearly evaluation and payroll policies adhered to by the district. The district also desired a smooth integration with existing district policies and collective bargaining agreements. Administrators had expressed a preference for not being responsible for the development and implementation of the district's Career Ladder Plan. Because of this, as noted before, teachers were largely responsible for the development of the system. Teachers also were responsible for having the most significant input with regard to a candidate's application, evaluation, and selection.

Group Processes, Leadership, and Decision Making

Collaboration and compromise characterized the workings of the planning committee. The committee itself was made up of the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, one principal selected by the superintendent, two community members selected by the PTA and the school board, and three teachers, one from each school selected by their respective faculties. The committee met once a week for nine weeks with each session requiring two to three hours.

One factor which influenced the decision making process was an emerging apprehension on the part of the teachers. Teacher representatives met several times during the nine week planning process to deal with these emerging concerns. These concerns involved several issues. A central concern was how to go about creating a fair, accurate, and effective evaluation process.

Another issue involved the discomfort teachers thought they would experience when given the responsibility of evaluating their peers. Teachers were concerned about the development of division or an unhealthy competitive spirit which might erode morale. Teachers were also concerned that career ladders might cause changes in the way they had shared time, materials, and/or teaching techniques in the past. Concern was also expressed in regard to the amount of funding; many teachers thought there would not be enough money for a quality career ladder program.

According to the superintendent, many of these concerns were dealt with effectively as time went on. Teachers on the committee became more familiar with the role of administrators and were able to provide satisfactory input to the other faculty members.

A key to working through these potential problems was the experience of administrators and teachers who attended the workshops. Those who did attend the workshops thought that their participation helped them to focus more effectively on the critical determinants of the career ladder proposal. This experience provided a subtle "push forward with the agenda" effect on other committee members. In fact, members thought that the potential for unproductive haggling and/or the formation of special interest groups was minimized as a result of the earlier workshops.

The superintendent provided formal leadership for the committee while at the same time choosing not to lead too aggressively. His role was described as that of a non-directive facilitator. The school board involved itself through its

participation in selection of the community representatives as well as providing an endorsement of the finished proposal. The teachers were highly involved in the development of evaluation and selection criteria. Compromise was needed as varied opinions regarding the state guidelines emerged. Predictably, some thought the guidelines were too nebulous in describing specific guidelines for funding of teacher projects or specific criteria for teacher evaluations. Others felt the guidelines were too rigid. Decisions were made by the committee only after open discussions and consensus votes on each career ladder issue.

## Resources

Few resources apart from the university-sponsored workshops were utilized, particularly after the planning committee meetings were underway. The superintendent provided information in the form of journal articles and other documents from a California school district. The superintendent also received resource information from other district superintendents and the State Office of Education.

## Structural Features of the Plan

The district's Career Ladder Plan featured the following components: extended days, extended responsibilities, teacher facilitator, and superior performance. Approximately $65,000 was allocated for the career ladder plan. Roughly $30,000 of this was used for funding the extended days component. A detailed form of the district's plan may be found in Appendix 3-1.